

CSCE NEWS RELEASE

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

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Commission Calls for Due Process in Sacking of Slovak Parliamentarian

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Washington, DC—Today the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe released the text of a January 17 letter to Ivan Gasparovic, Chairman of the Slovak National Council of the Slovak Republic, addressing the suspicious methods used in removing Slovak Parliamentarian Frantisek Gaulieder. The letter was signed by Chairman Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-NY), Co-Chairman Rep. Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ), Ranking Member Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) and Ranking Member Rep. Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD).

Gaulieder was removed from his seat in the Slovak Parliament after Gasparovic received a letter of resignation purportedly written by Gaulieder—who has repeatedly denied ever sending such a letter. The letter surfaced after Gaulieder resigned from Gasparovic's party, the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia, over such issues as a lack of transparency in privatization, the failure to resolve the kidnapping of President Michal Kovac's son, and the controversial policies of Culture Minister Ivan Hudec. Mr. Gaulieder's home was bombed while he and his family were there on December 6. Fortunately no one was harmed.

The Commission has called for the prompt reinstatement of Mr. Gaulieder in the Parliament as per the relevant OSCE documents, and for the quick investigation and prosecution of those responsible for attacking Mr. Gaulieder's home.

The text of the letter follows:

Dear Mr. Chairman:

We write today as Members of the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, a congressionally established government agency mandated by law to monitor and report to Congress on developments related to agreements of the participating States of the Organization for Security and

continued on page 2

CSCE NEWS RELEASE

Page 2 of 2

Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). In this context, we convey our profound concern regarding a fellow parliamentarian, Frantisek Gaulieder, and escalating threats to the process of democratization in Slovakia.

We understand that Mr. Gaulieder was elected to the Slovak parliament from a slate of candidates offered by the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia and that, in late November, he resigned from this party. We also understand that, subsequent to his resignation, he was removed from office after you received a letter, purportedly written by Mr. Gaulieder, in which he resigned from the parliament. Mr. Gaulieder, however, consistently denies having written or sent this letter.

The 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document states in para. 7.9 that participating States must ensure that candidates who obtain the necessary number of votes required by law are duly installed in office until their term expires or is otherwise brought to an end in a manner that is regulated by law in conformity with democratic parliamentary and constitutional processes. [Emphasis added.] Clearly, the removal of Mr. Gaulieder under these circumstances was inconsistent with the Copenhagen Document and with parliamentary practices followed by European democracies. We urge you, as Chairman of the Slovak National Council, to seek his immediate reinstatement.

We are also gravely concerned by the bomb attack against Mr. Gaulieder's home, which occurred on December 6 while he was at home with his wife and child. We have previously expressed to your government our alarm at the growing coincidence between acts of violence and political developments in Slovakia, most painfully evident in the unsolved murder of Robert Remias. This most recent attack against Mr. Gaulieder only heightens our growing concerns about the process of democratization in Slovakia.

We note the demand articulated by your colleague, Olga Keltosova, in her December 6 statement on behalf of the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia, that the crime against Mr. Gaulieder must be solved as soon as possible and that the perpetrators of this serious crime must be brought to justice. It is, of course, your party which currently controls the government's security, police, and investigative forces. We believe that the successful and credible investigation of this crime and prosecution of those who attacked Mr. Gaulieder's home, as well as those who murdered Robert Remias, would do a great deal to restore confidence in democratic reform in Slovakia, especially if undertaken in concert with a more thorough review and reform of the security apparatus itself.

Mr. Chairman, since the end of communism and establishment of Slovak independence, your country has achieved much and there is reason to be proud. Most importantly, time and time again, the people of Slovakia have demonstrated their commitment to democracy. We believe that further reform in Slovakia will pave the way for increased cooperation between our countries and accelerate Slovakia's integration into Western institutions.